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**Vol. 105 • No. 91**

LOCAL NEWS... LOCAL VIEWS

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**RTHS bowlers  
earn awards**

The Rochelle Hub and Lady  
Hub bowlers took home  
RTHS and Interstate 8  
awards. **See Sports**

**WEATHER**

**SUNDAY**  
HIGH LOW  
**53 29**

**MONDAY**  
HIGH LOW  
**60 35**

**TUESDAY**  
HIGH LOW  
**60 44**

**WEDNESDAY**  
HIGH LOW  
**57 44**

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**OBITUARIES**

- KAREN K. (SUPLER) LEE
- BETTY A. STATON

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- MENARDS
- VOTERS GUIDE

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Obituaries.....4  
Opinion.....6  
Community.....7



## Home a total loss after Wednesday afternoon fire in rural Ashton

### ‘The concerns we had were high winds...’

**BY JEFF HELFRICH**  
MANAGING EDITOR

**ASHTON** — There were no injuries and a home was a total loss after a structure fire on Wednesday afternoon in rural Ashton, Rochelle Fire Department Captain Zach Prewett said.

RFD and the Ogle-Lee Fire Protection District stations of Hillcrest, Flag Center, Creston and Steward were called at 2 p.m. to 8423 E. Illinois Route 38 to assist the Ashton Fire Protection District with a structure fire. Other mutual aid organizations that responded included Franklin Grove, Dixon City, Dixon Rural, Amboy Fire and the Ogle County Sheriff's Office, Prewett said.

“A passerby saw the flames and went and alerted the occupant of the home and got him out and called the fire in,” Prewett said. “The house was fully involved and flames were going through the roof when firefighters arrived on scene. It was completely



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

**There were no injuries and a home was a total loss after a structure fire on Wednesday afternoon in rural Ashton, Rochelle Fire Department Captain Zach Prewett said.**

a defensive operation and no firefighters were sent inside of the house. Most of the fire was out when I left at 4:15 p.m. and they were calling in an excavator for overhaul work and were going to work on extinguishing secondary fires.”

The structure fire reached the third alarm level. Prewett said he was unaware of any injuries to occupants or first responders, and the two-story home was a total loss with a garage on the property also seeing damage.

The total cost of the damage and the cause of the fire have yet to be determined, Prewett said. The state fire marshal was on the scene on Wednesday.

Firefighters battled high winds in a rural area on Wednesday afternoon.

“The concerns we had were high winds and no access to water on site,” Prewett said. “We had to truck water in and high winds advanced the fire once it broke through the roof of the house.”

## Rochelle VFW presents check to Queen of Hearts winner

### ‘We’re so thankful for everybody’s participation and involvement’

**BY JEFF HELFRICH**  
MANAGING EDITOR

**ROCHELLE** — On Friday, Feb. 28, Rochelle VFW Post 3878 presented a \$458,464.50 check to the winner of its Queen of Hearts contest, Lauri Hays. The contest ran for 49 weeks and reached a \$705,330 total jackpot.

The Queen of Hearts drawing involves 54 cards hidden under a covering to be revealed one card per week until the Queen of Hearts is drawn. There are 52 playing deck cards with the two jokers hidden. Players at the local post can purchase tickets in increments of six for \$5 and write a number corresponding to a hidden card on the board and their information on them before placing them in a tumbling drum. One ticket is drawn each Tuesday night and the card with the number on the ticket is revealed.

“I never expected in all those tickets that mine would ever be the one picked,” Hays said. “You can’t win unless you throw some tickets in there. I cried happy tears when I found out. I feel so thankful and



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

**On Friday, Feb. 28, Rochelle VFW Post 3878 presented a \$458,464.50 check to the winner of its Queen of Hearts contest, Lauri Hays. The contest ran for 49 weeks and reached a \$705,330 total jackpot.**

blessed.”

When the Queen of Hearts is drawn, the winner receives 65 percent of the pot. The remaining 35 percent (\$246,865.50) will be split evenly between the post and donations to nonprofit organizations. The VFW plans to use its \$123,432.75 portion for improvements and operational

costs. The donations to area nonprofits and veterans organizations will be made in the coming weeks.

VFW Commander Dennis Orlikowski said the recent run of the Queen of Hearts game went “very well” after it started out at around \$100,000 and saw a flurry of ticket sales and activity at the post in the

past several weeks.

VFW Quartermaster Joe Drought said the funds raised will “help tremendously” with projects at the post such as an ongoing floor remodel. He’s excited to make contributions to charities as well.

**See ROCHELLE VFW pg 3**



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

**The new Creston-Dement Public Library building at the corner of Main and Cederholm Streets is planned to open March 17, Library Board President Doug Kroupa said March 3.**

## New Creston-Dement Public Library planned to open March 17

**BY JEFF HELFRICH**  
MANAGING EDITOR

**CRESTON** — With move-in plans in place, the new Creston-Dement Public Library building at the corner of Main and Cederholm Streets is planned to open March 17, Library Board President Doug Kroupa said March 3.

The library decided to close its current location at 107 S. Main St. from March 2-March 16 as

it prepares for packing, moving and organizing. The construction project on the new building broke ground on March 15, 2024.

A referendum passed in June 2022 that allowed the Creston-Dement Public Library District to issue \$2.2 million in bonds to build a new library building on the land that was donated years ago for just that purpose.

**See LIBRARY pg 8**

**World Plumbing Day March 11**



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# LOCAL NEWS

## Locating services approved to help with water rust issues

### Creston Board meets Tuesday, village to go out or bids for storm sewer project

BY JEFF HELFRICH  
MANAGING EDITOR

**CRESTON** — At its monthly meeting Tuesday, the Creston Village Board of Trustees unanimously approved a \$4,164 bid from Blood Hound Underground Utility Locators for work on locating service lines as it hopes to alleviate rust issues in the village's water system. The board also considered quotes of \$6,000 and \$6,600 for the work. Village Engineer Kevin Bunge said the work will involve 15 homes and the work may vary on what it takes to find each service line and its source. Bunge said the work will begin immediately.

In recent months, trustees have discussed rust issues that some residents have seen and Bunge created a map showing areas seeing the worst rust issues in Creston, and he said he believes those areas coincide with bellies, low spots and old four-inch water mains in the village's water system. Back in December, the board unanimously approved a proposal from KLM Engineering for \$16,836 for the cleaning and inspection of Creston's water tower in another effort to alleviate rust issues. Bunge said Tuesday that the contractor is waiting on dry and warm enough weather to begin the work.

#### Sewer

Bunge said during the meeting that the village will soon be going out for bids for a planned storm

sewer project in Creston after it has received 90 percent of easement agreements back from homeowners affected by the project.

The project will consist of 36-inch storm sewer pipe being put in to replace broken drain tile and improve drainage in Creston. The storm sewer work will consist of adding pipe on both sides of the railroad tracks, but the current phase of it will not go under the tracks. The work was suggested due to issues with stormwater overflow.

The work will likely begin in the spring or summer of 2025. Bunge has estimated in the past that the project could roughly cost \$180,000-200,000.

Bunge originally planned to wait to secure all of the easements before the bid process but trustees directed him to move forward with the project due to legal precedent giving Creston the right to do the work.

"They drop the stuff in the ground and cover the pipe in two weeks," Bunge said. "And then it's just restoration. It's not that big of a project. It's a big pipe, but not that big of a project."

#### Library

Village Engineer Aaron Moore said during the meeting that he expects to do a final inspection at the ongoing new Creston-Dement Public Library project in the coming weeks with a move-in day possibly by March 17.

"The library's com-



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

**At its monthly meeting Tuesday, the Creston Village Board of Trustees unanimously approved a \$4,164 bid from Blood Hound Underground Utility Locators for work on locating service lines as it hopes to alleviate rust issues in the village's water system.**

ing along," Moore said. "Last week we did an above-ceiling inspection so they could put the ceiling tiles in, and there's a lot of finish work going on now. I'm anticipating a final inspection soon from the contractor. They haven't called yet for one. I anticipate this week or the following for a final inspection."

The project broke ground March 15 at the

corner of Main and Cedarholm Streets. A referendum passed in June 2022 that allowed the Creston-Dement Public Library District to issue \$2.2 million in bonds to build a new library building on the land that was donated years ago for just that purpose. The main reason for the desire for a new building is the library outgrowing its current space at 107 S.

Main St.

#### Subdivision

Moore provided another update to trustees on the building of new homes that has been taking place in the Creston Commons subdivision.

Moore said a final inspection will soon take place on the first new build and rough-in inspections were recently seen on the second and third to get started. Two

others are in the framing stage. The new homes have all been sized around 1,600 square feet.

Hayden Real Estate closed on the ownership of the subdivision at the end of December 2023. The village has hoped in recent years to see clean up, new homes and a new agreement with the subdivision's ownership. Construction work on the homes is still taking place amid the winter weather.



**On Friday, Feb. 21, RPD responded to an armed home invasion in the 100 block of 7th Avenue. An unknown female suspect knocked on the apartment door stating she needed assistance.**

## RPD seeking public's help in identifying home invasion suspects

**ROCHELLE** — The Rochelle Police Department is seeking the public's help in an attempt to identify home invasion

suspects.

On Friday, Feb. 21, RPD responded to an armed home invasion in the 100 block of 7th Ave-

nue. An unknown female suspect knocked on the apartment door stating she needed assistance. The victims let the female into

their residence. Soon after, an unknown male suspect entered the residence with a handgun. The suspects battered and robbed the

victims of several items including cash. They were last seen leaving the residence on foot. This is believed to be an isolated

and targeted event.

Anyone with information is asked to contact RPD at 815-562-6763 or ebaneski@rochelleil.us.

## NIU expands Digital Marketing Certificate Program with AI course

**DEKALB** — The Department of Marketing at Northern Illinois University (NIU), in collaboration with the Continuing and Professional Education department, has recently launched a Digital Marketing Certificate Program for ongoing learners. This initiative marks the first certificate program in our College of Business, aimed at equipping professionals with up-to-date skills essential in today's digital landscape.

Northern Illinois University (NIU) is excited

to announce the launch of the second course in the program, Artificial Intelligence in Digital Marketing, designed to equip professionals with the knowledge and skills to leverage AI technologies in addressing marketing challenges.

This comprehensive course delves into core AI concepts such as machine learning, natural language processing (NLP), deep-learning vision analysis, and the utilization of large language models (LLM) such as ChatGPT.

Participants will learn to apply these technologies to identify and solve a wide range of marketing problems within the marketing mix framework.

"The launch of the Artificial Intelligence in Digital Marketing course underscores NIU's commitment to providing cutting-edge education that meets the demands of today's digital landscape. This course not only enhances professionals' understanding of AI-driven marketing strategies but also strengthens the uni-

versity's role as a leader in innovative, career-focused learning," Pettee Borissova, director of NIU's Continuing and Professional Education department.

This program offers several key benefits for professionals looking to integrate artificial intelligence into digital marketing. Participants will develop an in-depth understanding of AI principles and their applications, building a strong foundation in this rapidly evolving field. The curriculum emphasizes practical

application, equipping learners with the skills to implement AI technologies effectively and solve real-world marketing challenges. Additionally, mastering cutting-edge AI tools and techniques can significantly enhance career prospects, helping professionals stay competitive in the dynamic digital marketing sphere.

This course is ideal for marketing professionals, business owners, and individuals interested in understanding how artificial intelligence can

transform digital marketing strategies. Whether you're looking to enhance your current marketing efforts or explore new career opportunities, this program offers valuable insights and practical knowledge. By enrolling in NIU's Artificial Intelligence in Digital Marketing course, participants will be well-prepared to navigate and leverage the shifting role of AI in marketing.

For more information and to register, please visit the program's webpage.

## NI Bird and Nature Alliance annual banquet set for April 9

**FREEPORT** — On Wednesday, April 9 at 5:30 p.m. Northwest Illinois Bird and Nature Alliance will be hosting its 42nd annual banquet featuring David and Adrienne Olson presenting "Yellowstone Unveiled".

David and Adrienne

Olson, photographers and naturalists, will share their insights and images of the greater Yellowstone National Park ecosystem. David has traveled to Yellowstone now for over 25 years learning its many secrets. Olson Photography of

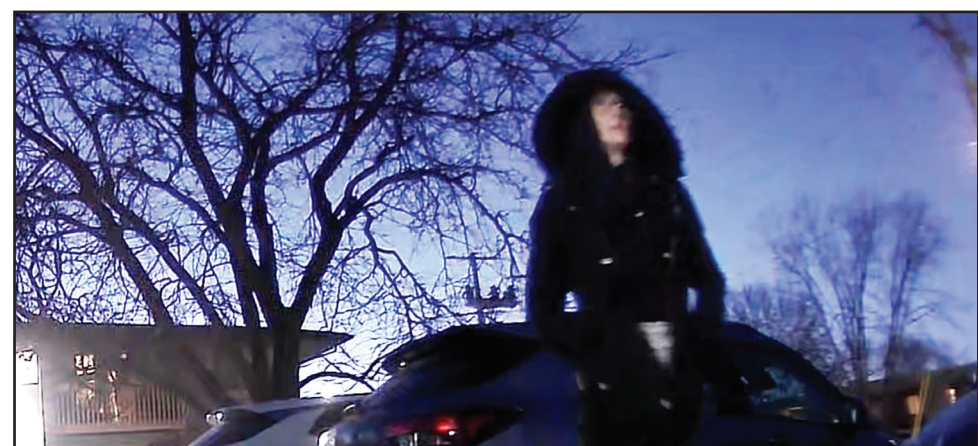
Rockford now conducts tours to the park, and as part of David's lifelong dedication, he also visits the park to produce new photographs whenever he can. David and Adrienne will share an amazing photo show, fascinating tales and interesting facts

that make Yellowstone National Park still one of the most incredible destinations in the world.

The banquet takes place at Highland Community College Student Conference Center in Freeport and includes a full tur- key or vegetable lasagna

dinner with delightful desserts for only \$32 for adults (kids 12 and under are free). Reservations for the meal must be received by March 29. If you just want to attend the program without the meal the cost is \$5 for adults (free for kids and students). Events

starts with a silent auction at 5:30 p.m., dinner is at 6 p.m. and the speaker will present at 7:30 pm. Further details about the banquet and online registration can be found at [www.nwlibirdnaturealliance.org](http://www.nwlibirdnaturealliance.org) or by calling Tim at 815-835-5109.



(COURTESY PHOTOS)



# LOCAL NEWS



The \$705,330 total jackpot was a record high for the VFW in its years running the Queen of Hearts game. Patrons looking to win life-changing money spent time at the post buying tickets in recent weeks and many also bought food or drinks during their time there, which helps with the nonprofit organization's revenue.

## ROCHELLE VFW: Check presented to Queen of Hearts winner

From page 1

“Our part of this is the satisfaction of being able to get this money out into the community and doing good things with it,” Drought said. “And using our share to improve our building infrastructure and having a solid foundation to pass onto the next generation of veterans.”

The \$705,330 total jackpot was a record high for the VFW in its years running the Queen

of Hearts game. Patrons looking to win life-changing money spent time at the post buying tickets in recent weeks and many also bought food or drinks during their time there, which helps with the nonprofit organization's revenue. The VFW is open to the public.

The VFW got a helping hand from members and volunteers when selling tickets became too much for bartenders to handle due to the game's popularity.

“You get to talk with people and it's people from all over,” Drought said. “People want to be a part of it. It's exciting to see that. The public is always welcome here. We like to say the VFW is where the community meets its veterans. We want to have that interaction and welcome the public. If we didn't have the public in here, we would've had to close our doors years ago.”

Drought said the VFW is always looking for new

members for its organization to keep numbers up in order to maintain a voice and relevance with lawmakers to affect change to help veterans in the country. Eligible veterans need to have been involved in a campaign or have served in Korea to join.

Drought said being able to hand a member of the community a check for life-changing money was gratifying. The start of the next Queen of Hearts game will be delayed for

4-6 weeks due to the upcoming completion of the post's flooring project and updates on the start of the game and its first jackpot will be provided on the VFW's Facebook page.

Orlikowski and Drought thanked the post's staff, members, volunteers and the community for their involvement over the past 49 weeks.

“The volunteers putting the hours and effort in is tremendous,” Drought said. “Our staff here is

top-notch. They make it happen. When it gets super busy, it's too much for the bartenders to sell tickets and take care of everyone's food and drinks. We count on our volunteers. And I want to send a big thank you to the community and everyone in the region that came and contributed and participated and was a part of the excitement. We're so thankful for everybody's participation and involvement. It's been a tremendous blessing.”

(PHOTOS BY JEFF HELFRICH)

## Kish College hosts floral expert for Artist in Residence program

**MALTA** — The Kishwaukee College Horticulture program hosted Iowa Master Florist (IMF) Julie Poeltler as part of the Artist in Residence (AIR) program offered through the American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD).

Poeltler AIFD, Professional Floral Communicators International (PFCI), IMF presented a floral design demonstration for Associate Professor of Horticulture Janet Gallagher's floral students and Kish's Student American Institute of Floral Designers (SAIFD) Floral Club members. The presentation gave students hands-on expertise in creating sympathy arrangements for caskets, urns and other pieces. Poeltler also demonstrated her experience in working with funeral homes and grieving families.

The AIR program is offered through the AIFD to bring together industry

professionals and floral design students at colleges and universities that host student AIFD chapters like Kish. Kish's horticulture program provides educational opportunities to students both past and present, including former student Emmy Kuhn, who now works as a full-time florist at Kar-Fre Flowers in Sycamore.

“I reached out to see if I could attend the event and get more professional experience. We get to learn about and make an urn piece,” Kuhn said.

Poeltler was inducted into the AIFD in 1994 and has owned Julie's Fountain of Flowers in Lone Tree, Iowa, for the past 42 years. Her professional experience includes creating designs for the Tournament of Roses Parade, the Academy Awards and multiple U.S. presidential inaugurations.

Learn more at [kish.edu/horticulture](http://kish.edu/horticulture).



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Guest florist Julie Poeltler assists a Kish floral student with a sympathy arrangement design. Poeltler conducted a lecture and demonstration as part of the Artist in Residence (AIR) program offered by the American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD).

## Kish College announces winners of 2025 Juried High School Art Exhibition

**MALTA** — Kishwaukee College has announced the winning selections of the 2025 Juried High School Student Art Exhibition.

The exhibition showcased two-dimensional and three-dimensional artwork from Kishwaukee College district high schools, including DeKalb, Hiawatha, Indian Creek, Oregon, Rochelle and Sycamore high schools. A total of 155 pieces were submitted, and works were displayed in the Kishwaukee College Art Gallery. Winning selections are below, and artists' names are listed as requested.

**Best In Show** — “Now You See Me” by Courtney Richied of Sycamore High School.

**Black and White Drawing** — “Statically Shocked” by Kyrie Cragin of Rochelle Township High School, First Place; “The Protector” by Samantha Minchala of Sycamore High School, Second Place; “Picture of Me” by Gabriele Hoyle of Oregon High School, Third Place.

**Ceramics** — “Waterfall” by Alexi Rodriguez of DeKalb High School, First Place; “Weeping Lilly” by Mya Livious of DeKalb High School, Second Place; “Imprint of the Ancients” by Yana Bartkiv of Rochelle Township High School, Third Place.

**Color Drawing** — “Memory Lane” by Denia Rincón of Rochelle Township High School, First Place; “Resistance” by Hannah Hart of Sycamore High School, Second Place; “Sweetened Death” by Litzy Agaton of DeKalb High School, Third Place.

**Mixed Media** — “Torn by Selfworth” by Teagan Auld of Rochelle Township High School, First Place; “Heart to Brain and Brain to Heart” by Brenda Cuautle of Sycamore High School, Second Place; “Blues” by Grace Tremble of Oregon High School, Third Place.

**Painting** — “Curiosity” by Issy Smith of DeKalb High School, First Place; “Scars of Life” by Christina Blanchard of DeKalb High School, Second Place; “Insomnia” by Marcus Montgomery of DeKalb High School, Third Place.

**Photography/Digital Media** — “Untitled” by Gialan Zuniga of DeKalb High School, First Place; “Forgotten Memories” by Everyiel Smith of Rochelle Township High School, Second Place; “Untitled” by Daisy Dominguez of DeKalb High School, Third Place.



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Kishwaukee College has announced the winning selections of the 2025 Juried High School Student Art Exhibition.

**Sculpture** — “Metal Bars and Hearts in Jars” by Macklynn Rager of Oregon High School, First Place; “Feminine Aneurysm” by Audrey Emmens of Hiawatha High School, Second Place; “Impulsive” by Sienna Seebach of Rochelle Township High School, Third Place.

Learn more about the exhibition at [kish.edu/hsartexhibition](http://kish.edu/hsartexhibition). Learn more about the Kishwaukee College Art Gallery or Art program at [kish.edu](http://kish.edu).

## Arellano introduces bill to allow local governments to store public records electronically

**SPRINGFIELD** — Senator Li Arellano, Jr. has introduced Senate Bill 1719, a legislative measure aimed at modernizing public record-keeping for local governments across Illinois. The bill amends the Local Records Act to allow local government units to store

public records electronically, reducing costs and improving efficiency.

Senator Arellano, Jr. built the legislation from his own experiences as a local mayor, as well as on discussions initiated by Peoria County at a January legislative breakfast co-hosted by the County

of Peoria, the City of Peoria, and the Peoria City/County Health Department.

“We must cut costs in Illinois. As technology continues to evolve, it is crucial that we provide local governments with the flexibility to store records in a way that is both secure and accessible,” said Senator Arellano, Jr. “This bill gives local governments the option to move away from outdated and costly paper-based systems and embrace a modern, digital approach.”

By eliminating unnecessary barriers to digital storage, SB1719 provides

local governments the tools to transition to a more modern and cost-effective record-keeping system.

“Allowing electronic storage will help local governments operate more efficiently and transparently, benefiting both officials and residents,” added Senator

Arellano, Jr. “This is already being done in court systems and is a common-sense update to our laws that aligns Illinois with the best practices in government record-keeping.”

Senate Bill 1719 has been assigned to the Government Operations committee.



# LOCAL NEWS

## Obituaries

### Karen K. (Supler) Lee

**NEWBERG, Ore.** — Karen K. (Supler) Lee passed away peacefully in Newberg Oregon, on February 15, 2025. She was born July 21, 1941 in Rochelle Illinois to Delbert and Marge Supler. She was a long time employee of Del Monte Corp. Karen retired from Del Monte in 1992. She loved reading, crafting, sewing, flowers, a big

garden, canning and baking with her granddaughter. Karen is preceded in death by her parents and brother Roger. Karen is survived by her daughter Dawn (Lonny) Anderson of Medford, Or; son Greg Walters, granddaughter Taylor (Kiefer) Westlund and family of Phoenix, Or. Her sister Bonnie Masterson, nieces Jennifer (Ben) Manning and family, Laura (Joseph) Wilmarth-Tyna and family.



nifer (Ben) Manning and family, Laura (Joseph) Wilmarth-Tyna and family.

### Betty A. Staton

**STEWART** — Betty A. Staton, 97, passed away peacefully Wednesday, March 5, 2025 at her niece's home in Naperville, Illinois. Betty was born on November 25, 1927 to Frank C. and Marie A. (Goetting) Amberger in Petersburg, IL. In 1945, Betty graduated from Petersburg Harris High School. On October 3, 1948, she married Clarence Staton in Petersburg, IL. Betty worked for over 34 years at Del Monte in Rochelle as a personnel service supervisor. She and her husband, Clarence, owned and operated Staton Aerial Service. She was a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Rochelle and enjoyed volunteering at the First Presbyterian Thrift Store.

Betty is survived by her nieces and nephews: Robin (Amy) Amberger of Naperville, IL, Tom (Sherry) Ross of Rochelle, IL, Debbie Ross of Rockford, IL, Mike (Tammy) Ross of Maysville KY, Kim Ross of Plano, TX, Lori (William) Jack of Evans, CO, and Mark Donaldson of Loves Park, IL; and first cousins, Helen L. Cacciapaglia and Peggy Lou Fix. In addition to her parents, Betty was preceded in death by her husband, Clarence, on January 6, 2006; sisters: Harriet Amberger, Frances Ross, Mary Catherine "DeeDee" Davidson and Shirley Donaldson; brother, Frank "Sonny" Amberger, Jr.; and nephews: Daniel and Brian Amberger. The visitation will be



from 10:00 - 11:00 A.M. Monday, March 10, 2025 at the First Presbyterian Church, 1100 Calvin Road, Rochelle. The funeral service will follow the visitation at 11:00 A.M. with Pastor Doug Forsberg officiating. Burial will be the following day, Tuesday, March 11, at Rose Hill Cemetery in Petersburg, IL at 11:00 A.M. Visit [www.ungerthorner.com](http://www.ungerthorner.com) to sign the online guest book.

## Stillman Valley man charged with predatory criminal sexual assault of a child

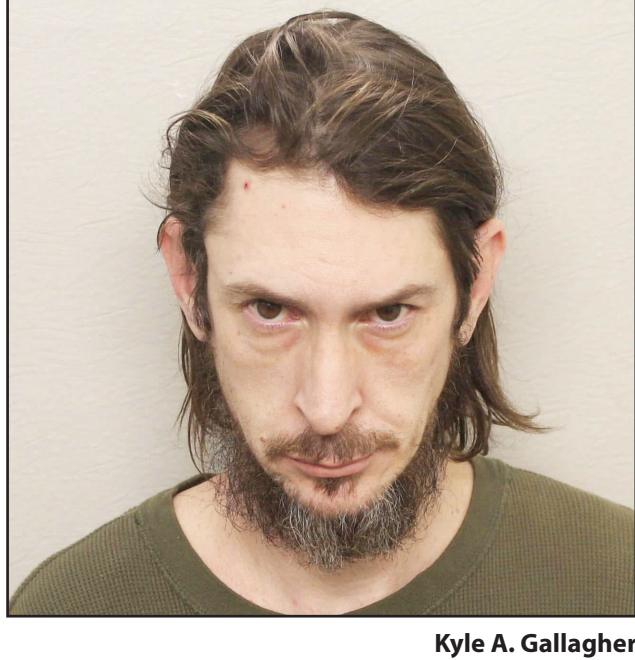
**STILLMAN VALLEY** — On Wednesday, Feb. 26 Ogle County Sheriff's Office detectives, along with members of the FBI, executed a search warrant at a residence in rural Stillman Valley stemming from a lengthy child pornography case which led into a sex-related investigation. As a result of the investigation, Joseph G. Dreesen, 24, of Stillman Valley, was charged with one count of predatory criminal sexual assault of a child (class-X felony). Dreesen was lodged in the Ogle County Jail pending a bond hearing in front of a judge. Federal charges are pending. All individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty.



Joseph G. Dreesen

## Oregon man arrested for sexual exploitation of a child

**OREGON** — On Tuesday, Jan. 14, Ogle County Sheriff's Office detectives began the investigation of a sexual exploitation of a child incident that occurred in rural Oregon. As a result of the investigation, Kyle A. Gallagher, 42, of was arrested on Feb. 27 and charged with one count of sexual exploitation of a child (class-four felony). Gallagher was lodged in the Ogle County Jail pending a hearing in front of a judge. All individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty.



Kyle A. Gallagher

## St. John's Lutheran Church kumla/ham dinner scheduled for April 5

**CRESTON** — St. John's Lutheran Church, 126 South St., Creston, will host its 28th annual kumla/ham dinner April 5. The cost will be \$18. This is a drive thru with two pickup times. The first one will run

from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and the second will be from 3-5:30 p.m. Norwegian homemade cookies will also be a pre-sale order. All cookies are \$8 per doz. Choices are kringla, krumkaka, tripoli-

lies, and almond bars. Advanced presale tickets only can be purchased by calling Dorothy (815) 384-5325, the church (815) 384-3720, or contact any church member. No tickets will be available at the door.

### OGLE COUNTY SHERIFF'S REPORT

**OREGON** — On March 1 at approximately 9:22 p.m. deputies responded to 107 West Orchard Hills Drive, Rochelle, for a domestic altercation. After an investigation, Rafael Valencia Jr., 24, of Rochelle, was placed under arrest for aggravated battery to pregnant person and domestic battery. Valencia was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was held pending an appearance before a judge. Deputies were assisted at the scene by Rochelle EMS.

On March 1 at approximately 11:11 a.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 18,000 block of East Illinois Route 38. After investigation, deputies placed Nayeli Hidalgo, 35, of DeKalb, under arrest for no valid driver's license. Hidalgo was also issued a citation for suspended registration. Hidalgo was transported to the Ogle County Jail where she was given a notice to appear and released pending a future court date.

On March 2 at approximately 11:11 a.m. deputies conducted a traffic in the 3,000 block of South Freeport Road. After investigation, deputies placed Ardany Everardo Estrada-Rueda, 28, of Humboldt, Tennessee for no valid license. Estrada-Rueda was also issued citation for no splash guards. Estrada-Rueda was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was released on a notice to appear and given a future court date.

On March 2 at approximately 9:54 a.m. deputies

### ROCHELLE POLICE REPORT

**ROCHELLE** — On Feb. 27 at 9:31 p.m. Trezure G. Bryant, 21, of Bolingbrook was cited for disregarding a stop sign. He signed a promise to comply and was given a March 31 Rochelle court date.

conducted a traffic stop near the intersection of Lowell Park Road and Penn Corner Road. After investigation, deputies placed the passenger, Alyssa Trotter, 32, of Polo under arrest for an active Lee County contempt of court warrant. Trotter was transported to Lee County deputies and held in lieu of bond.

On March 2 at 5:17 p.m. deputies, with the assistance of the Byron Police Department, conducted a warrant check at Casey's General Store (700 W. Blackhawk Drive) in Byron. As a result deputies arrested Hailey M. Quinn, 33, of Rockford, on an Ogle County warrant for possession of controlled substance. Quinn was additionally charged with possession of controlled substance (crack cocaine), and possession of drug paraphernalia. Quinn was transported to the Ogle County Jail and detained on the no bond warrant. Quinn was released on a notice to appear on the new charges.

On March 2 at approximately 5:12 p.m. deputies initiated a traffic stop near the intersection of Eagle Point Road and Donaldson Road. After further investigation Daniel Tegler, 35, of Chadwick, was placed under arrest for driving while license suspended. Tegler was released on a notice to appear.

On March 3 at 5:55 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the area of 6,000 North German Church Road. After a brief investigation, the driver of the vehicle, Issac Alvarez,

41, of Byron, was placed under arrest for an active Ogle County traffic warrant. Alvarez was transported to the Ogle County Jail. All subjects presumed innocent.

On March 3 at 7 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 11,000 block of East Illinois Route 72 for a speeding violation. After an investigation, Mauricio Luna Jr., 32, of Rockford was arrested for driving under the influence of combination alcohol/drugs. Luna was also cited for speeding and operating an uninsured motor vehicle. Luna was transported to the Ogle County Jail and released with a future court date.

On March 5 at approximately 8:20 a.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 14,000 block of East Lindenwood Road. After investigation, deputies placed Christopher McGill, 40, of Rochelle, under arrest for driving while license suspended. McGill was also issued a citation for operating a vehicle with suspended registration. McGill was released on a notice to appear with a future court date.

On March 5 at 10:03 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop on East Illinois Route 38 at the intersection with South Brooklyn Road. As a result, deputies arrested Brandon A. Moore Jr., 19, of Rockford, for driving while license suspended. Moore was additionally issued a citation for window tint. Moore was released on a notice to appear with a future court date.

All individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty.

On March 4 at 9:09 a.m. Timothy Rathledge, 54, of Forreton was cited for overweight axle. He was released on a notice to appear with an April 4 Rochelle court date.

On March 4 at 12:28 p.m. Steven P. Becker, 64, of North Aurora was cited for overweight gross. He was released on a notice to appear with an April 4 Rochelle court date.

On March 4 at 2:15 p.m. Elizabeth A. Cooper, 57, of Rochelle was cited for speeding. She signed a promise to comply and was given an April 4 Rochelle court date.

On March 5 at 4:34 p.m. Daniel Metzger, 26, of Rochelle was arrested for driving while license suspended. He signed a promise to comply and was given an April 4 Rochelle court date. All individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty.

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# LOCAL NEWS



**RTHS FFA members attend Cultivating Connections Conference**  
FFA members from Rochelle Township High School attended the Cultivating Connections Conference on Feb. 28. (Courtesy photos)

# CHURCH DIRECTORY

**Ashton Bible Church**, corner of Main and Paddock in Ashton. Pastor Farrel Stauffer, church phone is (815)453-2190, church website [www.ashtonbible.org](http://www.ashtonbible.org). Sunday School for all ages 9:00-10:00am, Morning Worship 10:15am, Wednesday Prayer Meeting/Bible Study 6:30-8:00pm.

**Calvary Lighthouse Church, Assemblies of God**, Senior Pastor, Dr. James Horvath. 14409 Hemstock Rd., Rochelle. Sunday Morning: Sunday Worship & Children's Church 10:00 A.M., Wednesday Evening 7:00 P.M. – Adult Teaching, Missionettes & Royal Rangers Childrens Classes, Nursery available for all services. HE-Brews Cafe is open before and after services. For further information, please call the CLC office at 815-562-7701, or email us at [staff@calvarylighthouse.com](mailto:staff@calvarylighthouse.com)

**Rochelle Church of Christ**, Keeping Christ at the center in the Hub City. We meet Sundays at 9:00am for Bible Study and 10:00am for worship. We also have a Wednesday Bible Study at 7:00pm. 206 Erickson Rd, Rochelle, IL 61068. You can call us at (815) 562-6572 or visit us on the web at [rochellechurch.com](http://rochellechurch.com). We also have a radio program Sundays just after 8am on WRHL 1060AM. Minister Dominic Venuso.

**Creston United Methodist Church and Steward United Methodist Church** - Rev. Ilhan You, Creston: 126 West South Street, P.O. Box 209, Creston, Illinois 60113. Sunday morning worship 9:00am. Coffee fellowship at 10:15am. Steward: 507 Main Street, P.O. Box 80, Steward, IL 60553. Adult Sunday School, 10:00am. Sunday morning worship and Children's Sunday School 11:00am. Contact the church office at 847-730-4370 for more information. [facebook.com/crestonumcil](https://facebook.com/crestonumcil) [facebook.com/stewardilumc](https://facebook.com/stewardilumc)

**Elim Reformed Church**, 140 S. Church Road, Kings, IL 61068. Phone: 815-562-6811. Email [goelimchurch@gmail.com](mailto:goelimchurch@gmail.com) Website [www.goelimchurch.org](http://www.goelimchurch.org) Sunday Morning Worship 10:00 Rev. Marv Jacobs

**Faith Lutheran Church** – (14206 E. Flagg Rd.) – “Making Christ Known Through Lives of Faith.” In-person worship is available each Sunday at 9:00 a.m. or online at “Faith Lutheran Social” on YouTube. Worship resources are also available on our Facebook page - ‘Faith Lutheran Church ELCA.’ You may also e-mail Pastor Joy Alsop at [Pastor@faithlchrochelle.org](mailto:Pastor@faithlchrochelle.org) for more information. All are welcome to join us!

**First General Baptist Church**, 500 S. 12th St, Rochelle. Phone: 815-562-5221. Email: [fgbcrochelle@gmail.com](mailto:fgbcrochelle@gmail.com). Website: [www.fgbcrochelle.org](http://www.fgbcrochelle.org). Facebook: [www.facebook.com/fgbcrochelle](https://www.facebook.com/fgbcrochelle). Pastor: Rev. Angelo Bonacquisti. **Sunday worship services:** 8:30 am, 11:15 am and 6:00 pm. **Sunday school:** 10:00 am. We'd be honored to have you join us as we worship JESUS and continue to grow in truth and love for God and each other. A nursery, children's church, youth group and small groups are available. If you need a ride please contact our church bus driver, John, at (815) 262-4275 by 8:30 am on Sunday. “For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9

**First Presbyterian Church** – An Amazing Place for Amazing Grace- Rev. Doug Forsberg, Senior Pastor. 1100 Calvin Road, Rochelle. Email: [info@placeforgrace.com](mailto:info@placeforgrace.com). Sunday morning worship 9:00am. In person or streamed online. On our Website and Facebook Live. [www.placeforgrace.com/](http://www.placeforgrace.com/) [www.facebook.com/placeforgrace](https://www.facebook.com/placeforgrace)

**Harvest Baptist Church** 241 Scott Ave. (Hillcrest). Rev. Duane Boehm, pastor. Email [duane712@hotmail.com](mailto:duane712@hotmail.com), cell 815-757-3427. Visit us on Facebook! Service times: Sunday morning worship with Children's Church at 10 am. Wednesday night worship at 7 pm.

**Immanuel Lutheran Church** Missouri Synod 16060 E. Lindenwood Road, Lindenwood, IL 61049. Rev. Dr. Matthew Rosebrock. Church Phone 393-4500. Church Worship 9:00 a.m. Sunday School Christian Education Hour at 10:30 a.m.

**Living Water Community Church** 405 N. Main St, Downtown Rochelle. Phone 815-561-6249, Website: [www.lwccr.com](http://www.lwccr.com), Like us on Facebook. We are Non-Denominational, Christ Centered, Casual dress, Christ Centered Live Band Worship. Mike Vogeler - Outreach and Seven C's Pastor, Chris Bender- Teaching Pastor and Doug Bunker - Missions and Children's Pastor. Sunday Worship Service- 10:00am. Nursery/Toddlers Ages 0-5 available during the service in the Splash building. Swim- Grades 1st-5th worship with the adults then break out for age appropriate teaching. Youth groups, Small groups, Life Groups and Workshops meet throughout the year for Bible teaching. 7C's Mission- serves the community physically & spiritually each month from 1135 Lincoln Hwy, providing lightly used clothing, Hygiene items, a light lunch and Elder Prayer open the second Saturday from 10am-2pm and the 4th Thursday from 4pm to 7:00pm and by appointment.. [f](https://www.facebook.com/lwccr)

**New Hope Fellowship (Church of God - Anderson, IN)**, 1501 10th Ave., Rochelle, IL 61068. Service: Sunday at 9 a.m. 10:30 a.m., (815)561-8400, [www.NHFchurch.net](http://www.NHFchurch.net) Pastor: Dan Sergeant and Pastor Nick Tornabene. (Classes for children through age fifth grade during service.)

**Rochelle United Methodist Church welcomes everyone to their worship service, and practices openness for all activities including communion. Worship is at 9:00 am. Sunday school for children begins around 9:15, following the Children's Time in worship.** A fellowship time with food and space for conversation occurs in Hicks Hall every week following the worship service. We celebrate communion with an open table on the first Sunday of every month, and on other appropriate occasions. Youth group is on Sunday evenings from 5:30-7:30. Our youth program includes service projects, discussion topics, Bible Study, and lots of fun and fellowship together. Some of our activities include packing meals at Feed My Starving Children, helping at Rochelle Christian Food Pantry and 7C's, working with animals at Barn on Baseline, Mystery trips (Destination Unknown!), and Interactive experiences on Dating boundaries, refugees, and homelessness. Youth group is for grades 6-12 and friends are always welcome. Recorded services are available on our YouTube channel and our website at [www.rochelleumc.com](http://www.rochelleumc.com). Our services are on the radio (93.5 FM) on Sunday mornings at 9:00 am. Our Facebook page is [www.facebook.com/rochelleumc](https://www.facebook.com/rochelleumc). **Our pastor is the Rev. Dr. Katherine Thomas Paisley.** Our address is 709 Fourth Ave. (815) 562-2164. Email is [admin@rochelleumc.com](mailto:admin@rochelleumc.com). At Rochelle United Methodist Church, everyone is welcome and loved!

**St. John's Lutheran Church**, 126 E. South Street, Creston. Phone 815-384-3720, Email: [StJohnsLutheran@aol.com](mailto:StJohnsLutheran@aol.com), members of NALC/LCMC. Worship is led by **Pastor Terese Whitten** 231-878-4150. St. John's Lutheran Church is a part of God's Family, planting hope, nurturing faith and harvesting love. Coffee or Fellowship at 10:00 a.m. Worship begins at 10:45 a.m. Sunday school is conducted during worship service except during the summer.

**St. Patrick Catholic Church** Rev. Jesus Dominguez; Deacon Fermin Garcia; Deacon George Schramm; 244 Kelley Dr. (Corner of Kelley & Caron Rd.), PO Box 329, Rochelle, IL 61068. **Office Hours:** 9:00 AM- 4PM Monday-Thursday, Phone: 815-562-2370. **Mass times:** 8:00 AM Monday-Thursday, Saturday Vigil Mass 5:00 PM English, 7PM Spanish, Sunday Mass 7:30 AM, 9:00 AM in English and 11:00 AM in Spanish. **Confessions:** Monday 8:30AM & 6:30PM, Tuesday 8:30AM, Saturday 8:30am & 4:00-4:45 PM Or by appointment. **Religious Education:** Deacon George Schramm, Director of Religious Education. 903 Caron Road, Rochelle, IL 61068, 815-561-0079; Website: [stpatricksrochelle.com](http://stpatricksrochelle.com) Email: [stpatrick-rochelle@rockforddiocese.org](mailto:stpatrick-rochelle@rockforddiocese.org) Facebook.com/StPatrickRochelle

**St. Paul Lutheran Church** “Building Relationships in Christ, Now and Forever!” Steven Hall, Principal, Parish Nurse-Marcia Schnorr. 1415 Tenth Ave., Rochelle. Church Office-562-2744. Worship times: 6:00 p.m. Saturday, 9:00 a.m. Sunday. Our service is broadcast over WRHL 1060AM at 10:00 a.m. Sunday. Sunday School 10:15-11:15 a.m. Call 562-6323 for more information about the school.





# LOCAL VIEWS

## Fiegenschuh: A good work life balance

THIS past week I had the pleasure of hosting my parents for five days. Typically, they fly out to see me once a year. I was stressed trying to determine what to do with them for five days. Per usual, it all worked out and we did a lot of reconnecting. What this past week really reminded me of is the importance of a good work life balance. I strive to be an A+ city manager, but sometimes that comes at a cost to other aspects of life. I make excuses for how much time I have and why do today what we can do tomorrow. There is always next year! I think we've all been there before. Below are some thoughts based on a lot of prayer and self-reflection the past few months!

The importance of enjoying family and friends with work-life balance: While career ambitions and financial stability are essential, it is equally important to prioritize time with family and friends. A well-maintained work-life balance contributes to overall well-being, productivity, and emotional fulfillment. Strengthening relationships: Spending quality time with loved ones fosters stronger relationships and creates lasting memories. Whether it is sharing meals, enjoying vacations, or simply engaging in heartfelt conversations, these moments help build bonds that provide emotional support and stability. Without dedicating time to family and

friends, relationships may become strained, leading to feelings of isolation and disconnection. Enhancing mental and emotional well-being: Overworking can lead to burnout, stress, and mental fatigue. I tell our staff taking breaks to spend time with family and friends offers a recharge from professional pressures, reducing stress levels and improving overall mental health. Engaging in social activities and shared experiences can elevate mood and provide a sense of belonging and happiness. Boosting productivity and creativity: A well-balanced life allows individu-

als to recharge and return to work with renewed energy and focus. Studies show that employees who maintain a healthy work-life balance tend to be more productive, creative, and motivated. Time spent with loved ones provides relaxation and inspiration, enhancing problem-solving skills and fostering a positive attitude toward work challenges. Setting a positive example: Balancing work and personal life sets a positive example for colleagues, employees, and family members. It demonstrates the importance of self-care and the value of maintaining relationships



Jeff Fiegenschuh

outside of professional responsibilities. Children and younger generations, in particular, benefit from seeing their parents and role models prioritize both work and family. Here are a few tips from colleagues and professionals who I have sought advice from. Set boundaries – Establish clear work hours and respect personal time. Prioritize quality time - Dedicate uninterrupted moments to family and friends. Practice time management - Plan tasks differently to create space for social events. Unplug from work - Limit work-related communications during person time (most difficult to accomplish for me).

Learn to say no - Avoid overcommitting to work demands at the expense of your personal life and mental and physical health. Achieving a work-life balance is not just about time management; it is about prioritizing what truly matters. Success is not solely measured by career achievements but also by the meaningful connections we cultivate. By making a conscious effort to enjoy time with family and friends, we enrich our lives with love, support, and happiness, ultimately leading to a more fulfilling and successful journey. *Jeffrey A. Fiegenschuh, MPA, ICMA-CM, is the city manager of the City of Rochelle.*

## Sarah Flanagan: Spring into the library

SPRING is going to be here before we know it. "Spring into the library" and find a material or program that is right for you. By making the library a spring break destination, you can make the most out of your Rochelle Staycation. "Busyschedules and daily routines don't leave much time for exploring new places or businesses around our own hometowns. A staycation is as good an excuse as any to finally check things off your tourist to-do list. Wander a nearby historic

district, visit local parks, ride your bike somewhere you've never been before, visit a U-Pick farm or try out a new yoga studio." (<https://www.aaa.com/tripcanvas/article/9-reasons-a-staycation-just-might-be-the-new-vacation-CM79>) We have planned a variety of activities to make your spring break staycation fabulous. We encourage you to come to your local library and experience all of the things that we have to offer. Reading can take you anywhere and using your imagination can al-

low your mind to wander and explore. Spring break activities: Monday, March 24: Donuts & A Movie 11 a.m. "Inside Out 2". A Play in 90 minutes 1-2:30 p.m. - grades K-fifth. Come and perform a play in 90 minutes! Kids will spend an hour and a half learning how to put on a performance. Complete with auditions, rehearsals and a performance at the end! Tuesday, March 25:



Sarah Flanagan

Just for Kids! Art Workshop: Printmaking Party 10-11 a.m. Books with Friends: Tiny Food Party 4-5 p.m. Ages 8-13 years old. Rochelle Green Thumbs 4-H Club 5-6 p.m. This is the first Green Thumbs Club meeting of the year. Come and be a part of this fun garden club! Ages 8-18 years old. Wednesday, March 26: Story Time 10:15 a.m. & 5 p.m.: Baby Animals & Spring Weather. Ages

birth to 7 with an adult. Coloring Club 4-5 p.m. Join us for some relaxing coloring! Snacks included! Thursday, March 27: Lightbeam Players Presents: The Cowardly Lion and the Quest for Oz. Performance at 2 p.m. Just for Kids! Art Workshop: Mixed Media Donuts 10-11 a.m. Friday, March 28: Pizza & A Movie 11:30 a.m. "Wicked" To register for any program or with questions call the library (815) 562-3431 or email [ashleyc@flaggrochellepubliclibrary.org](mailto:ashleyc@flaggrochellepubliclibrary.org)

flaggrochellepubliclibrary.org. Take a Rochelle staycation and visit your local library. We are excited to be part of your staycation plans. We have a variety of books, DVDs, CDs and digital materials to choose from. If we don't have it in our building, we can use our interlibrary loan service to get your material for you. It will be delivered to the library free of charge. We are here to help you. See you soon! *Sarah Flanagan is the director of the Flagg-Rochelle Public Library.*

## Letter: Not the right path for America

DEAR editor, For all of my life, I have been proud that my country has been the leader of the free world in its ongoing conflict — sometimes hot and sometimes cold — with nations in which freedom is suppressed

and dictatorship reigns. That leadership role has been taken up by every administration — whether Democratic or Republican, conservative or liberal — in this and the previous century, because it represents what America stands for and has stood

for since its great principles were enunciated in the Declaration of Independence. Until now. It is with great sadness that I have watched as the United States has now seemingly chosen



to abdicate its long-held role as leader of the free world, leaving less powerful and less wealthy democracies to fend for themselves against increasingly well-armed and dangerous dictators who relish the

thought of extinguishing the light of liberty which has shown from America for so long. This cannot be the right thing for America to do. It cannot be the moral thing to do. It cannot be the wise thing to do. I can only hope that enough other Americans

will let their views be known — peaceably and without anger — that the force of their voices will prevail in time to reverse this abdication and restore order in the world. **Alan Cooper,** Rochelle

### How to contact government officials

U.S. Con. Darin LaHood  
1424 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D.C.  
20515  
(202) 225-6201

IL Sen. Li Arellano Jr.  
Stratton Office Bldg  
Springfield, IL 62706  
(217) 782-1942

IL Rep. Bradley Fritts  
Stratton Office Bldg  
Springfield, IL 62706  
(217) 782-0535

Have a letter you want to submit to us? Send it to [news@rochelle-news-leader.com](mailto:news@rochelle-news-leader.com)

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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Rochelle News-Leader encourages responsible letters to the editor on subjects of interest to our readers. Editing may be necessary for space, clarity or to avoid obscenity or libel, but ideas will not be altered. All letters must bear the handwritten signature of the writer and include address and phone number or e-mail address for verification purposes. Neither the street address nor phone number will be printed. Letters should

be typed or legibly handwritten, and no anonymous letters will be published. Any letters from boards or organizations must include at least one name of an individual. Any criticism of public officials should be limited to issues related strictly to their position or actions made in office, as personal attacks will not be published. Letters involving private disputes between the writer and a business will not be published. Political endorsements will be

published, however letters from candidates endorsing themselves will not be printed. Letters may be dropped at the News-Leader office (211 IL Route 38 East), mailed to the News-Leader (P.O. Box 46, Rochelle, IL 61068) or e-mailed ([news@rochellenews-leader.com](mailto:news@rochellenews-leader.com).) The News-Leader reserves the right to edit or reject any letter to the editor for any reason, and letters chosen for publication do not necessarily reflect the views of this newspaper.



# COMMUNITY

## Free coin appraisal at the Rochelle Moose March 16

**ROCHELLE** — On Sunday, March 16, there will be a free coin appraisal at the Rochelle Moose from 1-5 p.m. This event will be open to the public. John Gruben and Dave Schabacker can evaluate foreign and domestic coins and US currency. So, bring down your coins that you have been collecting for years! It is always a treasure hunt! This event will take place in the dining room of the Moose Lodge. If there are any questions call Dave Schabacker at 815-761-3042.

## Hispanic 4-H Juntos Family Experience set for March 27

**DEKALB** — Mark your calendar for the Hispanic 4-H Juntos Family Experience on Thursday, March 27, from 1-4 p.m., at Rock Valley College, Main Campus Stenstrom Center, at 3301 N. Mulford Road in Rockford. This event will be presented primarily in Spanish and includes presentations on college admissions, financial aid, dual credit opportunities, and a tour of the main campus. Everyone is welcome at this event hosted by Illinois Extension DeKalb County 4-H and Rock Valley College. If you need reasonable accommodations to participate in programming, contact the DeKalb County Extension office at 815-758-8194. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your needs.

## Haugdahl promoted to Stillman Bank portfolio manager

**ROCKFORD** — Stillman Bank has recently promoted a key member of its successful team in northern Illinois. Eric B. Haugdahl, CFP®, has been promoted to the position of portfolio manager, according to Thomas R. Hughes, president and CEO. A lifelong resident of Rockford, Eric has five years of banking experience. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a minor in finance from Northern Illinois University. In his new position, Eric will manage investment portfolios for clients within our Trust and Wealth Management Department. He will be located primarily in the bank's Rockford office, 8492 East State Street, but will assist clients at all six Stillman Bank locations. Eric also recently earned his Certified Financial Planner certification (CFP®) from the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards. The CFP® mark identifies those individuals who have met the rigorous experience and ethical requirements of the CFP Board, have completed financial planning coursework, and have passed the CFP® Certification Examination covering the following areas: the financial planning process, risk management, investments, tax planning and management, retirement and employee benefits, and estate planning. CFP® professionals also agree to meet ongoing continuing education requirements and to uphold the CFP Board's Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility, Rules of Conduct, and Financial Planning Practice Standards. "We would like to congratulate Eric on his well-deserved promotion and for earning his Certified Financial Planner certification," stated J. Joseph McCoy, Stillman Bank Vice president and senior trust officer. "Eric's knowledge and dedication to his work will continue to be of great value to our clients and the communities we serve." For more information on Eric Haugdahl or to find out more about Stillman Bank's products and services, please contact (815) 332-8850 or visit [www.stillmanbank.com](http://www.stillmanbank.com).



- Feb. 11 - Xoe LeMay, Dixon, \$25
- Feb. 12 - Tom Myrick, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 13 - Juan Luna, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 14 - Bill Cash, Roscoe, \$25
- Feb. 15 - Alyssa Perez, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 16 - Eva Chu, Rochelle, \$50
- Feb. 17 - Rocio Belmonte, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 18 - Bridget Schott, Dixon, \$25
- Feb. 19 - Mark Wanner, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 20 - Leslie Ramsey, Roscoe, \$25
- Feb. 21 - Rajiji Sud, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 22 - Doris Parks, \$25
- Feb. 23 - Tracy Alford, Rochelle, \$50
- Feb. 24 - Shelly Crouch, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 25 - Patti Doyle, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 26 - Ashley Lawrenz, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 27 - Jessica Huerta, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 28 - HOPE of Ogle County, \$25
- Mar. 1 - Gary Tarvestad, Rochelle, \$25
- Mar. 2 - Danica Rogers, Rochelle, \$50
- Mar. 3 - Jim Neisel, St. Charles, \$25
- Mar. 4 - Stacey Ansteth, Rochelle, \$25
- Mar. 5 - Zoey Schabacker, Rochelle, \$25
- Mar. 6 - Heather Lara, Rochelle, \$25
- Mar. 7 - Pat Fletcher, Rochelle, \$25
- Mar. 8 - Brock Sutton, Mendota, \$25
- Mar. 9 - Kelly Johnson, Rochelle, \$50

### BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

March 9 Minia Waters	March 22 Wakely Peterman	March 26 LeeAnn Komadina Kim Dougherty Bernie & Anna Sexton (anniversary)
March 13 Veronica Lopez	March 23 Kristi Gonzales	
March 16 Christy Oleson	March 24 John Wooten Lanie McPherson	March 30 Grace Olson
March 19 John Overstreet	March 25 Chaz & Kathy Conant (anniversary) Liz Danekas Shaun Rosenbach	
March 20 Jesse Lopez Rachelle Phillips		

Call 815-561-2151 to submit names for birthdays and anniversaries



# Coffee Break

## Super Crossword

### INTELLECTUAL TREAT

### MAGIC MAZE • HORSE

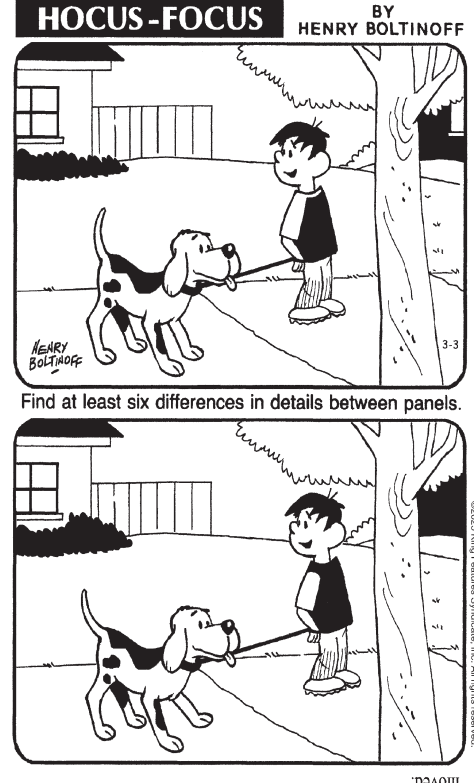
Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: NAILED TO A HORSE'S HOOF

And buggy	Doctor	Opera	Weed
Back	Fly	Race	Whisperer
Chestnuts	Hide	Sense	Wrangler
Collar	Liniment	Trainer	

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### HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Boy is moved. 2. Shirt is different. 3. Tail is moved. 4. Window is missing. 5. Bush is larger. 6. Dog's leg is moved.

### Super Crossword

Answers:

Across: 1. Buggy, 2. Doctor, 3. Opera, 4. Weed, 5. Back, 6. Fly, 7. Race, 8. Whisperer, 9. Chestnuts, 10. Hide, 11. Sense, 12. Wrangler, 13. Collar, 14. Liniment, 15. Trainer.

Down: 1. Buggy, 2. Doctor, 3. Opera, 4. Weed, 5. Back, 6. Fly, 7. Race, 8. Whisperer, 9. Chestnuts, 10. Hide, 11. Sense, 12. Wrangler, 13. Collar, 14. Liniment, 15. Trainer.

### Super Crossword

Across: 1. Accord, Civic and Pilot, 2. Blue toon, 3. Hubbubs, 4. Honorary deg. for a jurist, 5. Unicellular organism, 6. Subdued, with "down", 7. Receives a salary, say, 8. Boston baseballers, 9. Verb form in "I used to solve puzzles," e.g., 10. Position of advantage, 11. Stuff in some viral genes, 12. How- (manuals), 13. Detroit-to-Philly dir., 14. Job opening, 15. Literary finale, 16. War deity, 17. Pre- (replace), 18. What's allotted in soccer when a player is hurt, 19. Sell in stores, 20. Thinned out, 21. Bohemian lager, 22. "Fathers and Sons" novelist, 23. Notion, in Nice, 24. Story, 25. Lions' locale, 26. L-Q linkup, 27. "Little" co-star Rae, 28. In the best-case scenario, 29. Sibling who looks the same, 30. Japanese menu item, 31. Fall mo., 32. Suffix of superlatives, 33. Korean, e.g., 34. Molar requiring extraction, maybe, 35. Title for Gandhi, 36. "Good Will Hunting" director Gus Van, 37. Virtuosos, 38. Screening airport org., 39. Oodles, 40. Love deity, 41. Dog with a reddish, wiry coat, 42. Beirut's land, 43. Barney Fife portrayer Don, 44. Charred, 45. Retreat in the clouds, 46. Downs food, 47. Good friends, 48. River mouth features, 49. From scratch, 50. Horse's kin, 51. San Francisco's — Valley, 52. Aged, 53. Retirement of Rorschach, 54. Painful podiatric problem, 55. Geronimo's people, 56. 2003-16 Cowboys quarterback, 57. Large spoon, 58. "Peanuts" girl, 59. Former United rival, 60. Has- —, 61. Lectern, e.g., 62. Group of PC experts, 63. or what this puzzle's 10 theme answers are?, 64. "Wailing" instruments, 65. Rouse, 66. NYC cultural center, 67. Like many insensitive jokes, 68. Smells awful, 69. 32nd prez, 70. Will Smith's role in "Men in Black", 71. Ten: Prefix, 72. Hitter Mel, 73. Painful, e.g., in brief, 74. Volcano in Calif., 75. Thin, supple and graceful, 76. 34th prez, 77. — fours (teacakes), 78. Fern leaf, 79. Golf ball prop, 80. "Salt" co-star Schreiber, 81. Port city near Buffalo, NY, 82. TV's Gomer, 83. Neighbor of Belg., 84. Grande of pop, to fans, 85. Gun, as an engine, 86. Greek vowel, 87. Christmas party headwear, 88. Fuel efficiency stat, 89. Forecasts, 90. Found on a radio dial, 91. "What's —?" (Bugs Bunny's greeting), 92. Like tilted type, 93. Break in the action, 94. State bird of Hawaii, 95. Marina del —, 96. Beginning ltr., 97. Volcano in Calif., 98. "We're in danger here!", 99. Loretta of "M\*A\*S\*H", 100. Thailand, once, 101. Noted visitor to 60-Down, 102. Wife of Osiris, 103. Part of Russia's parliament, 104. Fox Sports competitor, 105. Webpage, 106. Pakistani city, 107. Lyric poems, 108. Occult cards, 109. Low-budget, in ad speak, 110. Other, in Oviedo, 111. Wrestling pad, 112. Stein drinks, 113. "Watermark" singer, 114. Apropos of, 115. Radio host, 116. Japanese menu item, 117. Tpk.s., e.g., 118. Cornea cover, 119. Still, at this late date, 120. Salami alternative, 121. Vein's cousin, 122. Japanese fencing style, 123. Sam of Sam's Club, 124. Actor Mineo, 125. Be victorious in, 126. "Same goes for me", 127. Honoree on Mar. 17, 128. "I'm buying", 129. Zilch, 130. Potter's oven, 131. Ran, as dye, 132. Sharp-tasting, 133. Brutus' "Behold!", 134. Actor LaBeouf, 135. Burst (with), 136. Hairy sitcom cousin, 137. Celestial ball, 138. Suffering, 139. Golf's Ernie.



# LOCAL NEWS

## LIBRARY: New building has been in the making for 20 years

From page 1

The main reason for the desire for a new building was the library outgrowing its current space at 107 S. Main St.

"It took a lot of hard work above and beyond the normal capacity of a volunteer library board," Kroupa said. "We worked with a bunch of professionals all the way along the line. We had wants versus needs as we were starting out. We brought in a library consultant to help us to focus on what we really needed to put in versus what we really thought we wanted to put in. And it helped us to focus on a library of this size and structure. We've had a lot of tremendous volunteers. We had people here this past weekend to move in all the library shelves. We had 13-14 people from the community that came in. And we were able to get it moved in very, very quickly and easily, so we have a lot of community support to get this going where we're at."

The library project had to undergo a redesign due to an unexpected \$800,000 funding gap due to not receiving a state grant and higher-than-anticipated building costs. The redesigned plans made the project about a third smaller. The redesign caused about a year-long delay.

The building was made smaller and reconfigured, while retaining its planned amenities with the exception of study rooms. The new design also allows for potential future expansion. "It's very, very close to our conceptual plan," Kroupa said. "There's always little things different

that we could see to do, but very, very close to what we were thinking about and planned. It's going to serve the community well. In fact, since we started to build the building here, we've seen new housing in the area. Because this is one of the driving functions. We got something that attracts people."

Kroupa said despite the prices of building materials rising almost 75 percent following the COVID-19 pandemic, the library's construction was able to be done very close to its original budget.

Library Director Kristi Scherer said the project is stretching funds in every way it can. It was recently donated furniture pieces from another library and got some of its current pieces reupholstered. The Creston-Dement Public Library also has written grants for its children's area.

"We've strived to try to do the best that we can with the money that we have and with grants and public health and donations and things like that," Scherer said. "We've caused a lot of excitement in the library community. We've received things like 3D printers, sewing machines and a fridge. We'll have more space with the community room. I'm trying to get a hold of the Northern Illinois Food Bank rep for free summer lunch. I'm hoping that comes to fruition for the kids here in town."

Kroupa said that he's overwhelmed when he sees the finished building after the amount of work that it took. In recent years, the library's longtime space saw

increased use, which made a renewed push for a new library in the community.

The new building and property will lend itself well to accessibility, multiple events at once, more programs, a community garden, and less impact from trains.

Kroupa said there are no set plans for a grand opening ceremony, but the board wants to pick a day and involve the entire community.

"There's several of us that go to different churches and people are talking in positive respects about what's going on and see what's happening," Kroupa said. "Now they can see it expanding and growing, and when they get inside, it'll even be more exciting. We've seen strong community support."

Scherer said she's excited about more space to do programming and having a storm shelter in the building for people in the community. She likened the experience of the new library to Christmas morning, after waiting 20 years since the land was originally donated.

Kroupa called the whole experience of building a new library "very challenging."

"We made many public presentations to convince people the referendum was a good idea," Kroupa said. "We let people make comments, both positive and negative, to confirm that this is what we as a town and a community need. It was a lot of work, but we got it done. For me, it's almost an out of body experience walking around in the completed building."



(COURTESY PHOTO)

State Rep. Brad Fritts (R-Dixon) is proud to announce that his Deputy Chief of Staff and Outreach Director Piper Grazulis recently won the Shoulder to the Wheel Award from the Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce.

## Rep. Fritts' staff honored

DIXON — State Rep. Brad Fritts (R-Dixon) is proud to announce that his Deputy Chief of Staff and Outreach Director Piper Grazulis recently won the Shoulder to the Wheel Award from the Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce.

"I couldn't be more proud of my Deputy Chief of Staff and Outreach Director, Piper Grazulis, for receiving this award," said Rep. Fritts. "Her dedication to the people of the 74th District is remarkable, and I am

truly fortunate to have such a committed team member working every day to improve our community."

The Shoulder to the Wheel Award honors an individual who demonstrates unwavering dedication, hard work, and commitment to the betterment of the community. This award recognizes those who go above and beyond, putting their "shoulder to the wheel" to drive positive change, support local initiatives, and uplift businesses and resi-

dents through their efforts. act on the community.

"As the committee reviewed the applications and reflected on the incredible success of so many outstanding individuals, one name kept surfacing," said Sam Smith, president/CEO of the Rock Falls Chamber. "Piper's positivity and drive stood out time and again. As the committee finalized their discussion, it became clear that there was a bold and deserving winner for this year's award."

## Fritts honors Dinges Fire Company in Amboy for February Local Business Highlight

AMBOY — For his February 2025 local business highlight, State Rep. Bradley Fritts (R-Dixon) chose to highlight Dinges Fire Company in Amboy. Rep. Fritts spent time touring the business and presented the owner with a certificate of appreciation for his contributions to the community.

"This month, I am proud to recognize Dinges Fire Company in Amboy for their dedication to public safety and their remarkable growth as a company," said Rep. Fritts. "Dinges Fire Company provides essential equipment and services to fire departments across the Midwest, and their continued expansion is a testament to their hard work and commitment to their mission."

Founded in 2002 by owner Nick Dinges, Dinges Fire Company sells firefighter protective equipment, rescue tools, gear, and more. They also service fire trucks on site. Dinges Fire Company currently employs over 180 people across multiple states.



(COURTESY PHOTO)

For his February 2025 local business highlight, State Rep. Bradley Fritts (R-Dixon) chose to highlight Dinges Fire Company in Amboy.

Rep. Fritts continued, "I also want to recognize Nick Dinges not only as a business leader but as a dedicated public servant. Not only does he work as an assistant fire chief with the Sublette Fire Department and a firefighter-paramedic with the Amboy Fire Department, but Nick also runs Sublette 365, a non-profit organization that works to fund projects to develop and beautify Sublette. Nick has devoted himself to bettering our community. His lead-

ership, and the continued success of his team, deserve to be honored."

Dinges Fire Company is located at 243 East Main Street in Amboy. For more information, you can visit their website at DingesFire.com. To nominate a local business in District 74 for a future highlight, visit RepFritts.com and select Local Business Highlight Submission Form under Resources.

For more information about Representative Fritts, visit RepFritts.com.

**Merlin's & The Other Side Boutique**  
**& Hagemann Horticulture**

**Spring Open House**  
**March 14 open 9-5**  
**March 15 open 9-3**

**Garden Party**  
**April 25 open 9-5**  
**April 26 open 9-3**

**Door Prizes, Store-Wide Discounts & Food Samplings**



(COURTESY PHOTO)

From left to right are Pam Cunningham, Jennifer Bakener, Julie Robinson, Molly Baker, Jeff Bold, Becky McCanse, Bev Opalka, Karen Urish and April Bold.

## 100+ Women Who Care of Ogle County donates to Encore! Mt. Morris

MT. MORRIS — On March 3, representatives of 100+ Women Who Care of Ogle County presented Jeff Bold of Encore! Mt. Morris with the donations received from the January quarterly meeting. Each member donates \$100 each quarter directly to the charity that is chosen by vote. There

are now over 100 women, hence the change to 100+ Women Who Care.

The group meets each quarter in January, April, July and October to hear three representatives of local non-profits and vote for one to be that quarter's recipient. 100+ Women Who Care are making a

significant impact in the local community. The next quarterly meeting will be held at the Lincoln Arts Center in Rochelle on April 8 at 6 p.m. For more information contact Deanna Forrest at forrestdede5@gmail.com or find them on Facebook [www.facebook.com/oglegives](http://www.facebook.com/oglegives).

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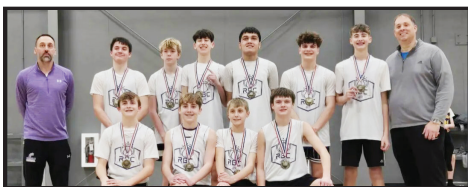
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SUNDAY, MARCH 9, 2025

ROCHELLE NEWS-LEADER • SECTION 2 • PAGE 1

# SPORTS



## RBC BOYS WIN TOURNEY

The Rochelle Basketball Club eighth-grade team completed a perfect season.

See page 2 for more details

## RTHS Boys Basketball

# Offense fuels late-season success

Senior guards Harley, Lewis headline departing seniors after 13-20 campaign

BY RUSSELL HODGES  
SPORTS EDITOR

**ROCHELLE** — The Rochelle Hubs played their best basketball toward the end of the 2024-25 season, winning six of their 10 games in the month of February after a tough first few months. Although the Hubs fell one point short of their quest for a regional championship, Rochelle's success on the offensive end, combined with its youth, bode well for the program's future.

The Hubs finished with a 13-20 overall record and a 3-7 record in the Interstate 8 Conference. Rochelle won four of its last five games, taking down Winnebago, Byron and Ottawa before opening the IHSA 3A Freeport Regional with an upset against Woodstock in the semifinals. A buzzer-beating shot from Boylan prevented the Hubs from their first regional title since 2022.

"We got off to a slow start early and we played a lot of tough opponents," head coach Tim Thompson said. "I thought we had a tough time getting going and it took us a while to get in shape and get over the

bumps and bruises of football... As we approached the middle of the season, we weren't winning enough and it would be difficult to keep the kids locked in, but our senior leadership was there and the kids kept hanging in there. They were getting better and as we entered February, we were playing our best basketball."

Offense fueled the Hubs over the latter stages of the season, as Rochelle averaged 72.1 points per game over its final 10 games. Among the catalysts for the Hub offense were senior guards Carson Lewis (12.7 points, 4.3 rebounds, 2.3 assists per game) and Elijah Harley (10.6 points, 3.3 rebounds and 2.5 assists per game), who served as team captains and were the only players on the varsity roster with three years of varsity experience. Harley and Lewis, who surpassed 1,000 career points this season, are two of four seniors departing from the program after this year.

"As we were getting closer to regionals, we knew that we were scoring the ball well and we scored the ball well last year," Thompson said. "As the year was

going on, we were able to share the ball better and we knew where our shots were coming from. Defense was a struggle for us the whole year and one thing we need to look at going forward is how we can get better on the defensive end. I don't think our offense is an issue and I think we're comfortable there."

Although Rochelle will lose a pair of three-year varsity players in Lewis and Harley, the Hubs are set to return a host of players including 6-foot-5 sophomore forward Brody Bruns (17.5 points, 11.3 rebounds per game), who averaged a double-double in points and rebounds this season. Junior guard Van Gerber (10.4 points and 3.0 assists per game) led Rochelle in 3-point shooting, while junior forward Brode Metzger (3.7 points and 4.8 rebounds per game) provided toughness and effort on the glass. Bruns, Gerber and Metzger are all second-year varsity players projected to return next winter.

"I'm really encouraged about where we're headed," Thompson said. "I wasn't sure if our underclassmen would be able to give us sustained minutes this year, but



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

**Freshman Cohen Haedt is one of multiple underclassmen who earned significant minutes for the Rochelle Hub varsity basketball team during the 2024-25 season.**

we were able to fill them in over the summer... We can't replace senior leadership or three-year varsity experience, but we'll have Brody, who needs to be our anchor on offense and defense. Van and Brode are going to be three-year varsity players next year and we're going to be leaning on those guys."

Bruns, who recorded 22 double-doubles this season, wasn't the only underclassman who played a critical role for the Hubs. Freshman

guard Cohen Haedt (5.8 points per game) became a starter late in the season, while 6-foot-6 sophomore forward Warren Schweitzer earned more minutes off the bench as the season progressed. Sophomore guard Mason Ludwig, who started games early in the season and continued to play regular minutes off the bench, will be another player to watch.

"We have a good plan in place and we feel that

this summer will be more dedicated to practicing and bringing teams in for controlled scrimmages," Thompson said. "We want to tighten up our defense and we want to tighten up what we're doing offensively throughout practices. I think we can get those things fixed during the summer and we can be ready to go, even through a long football season, where our kids are comfortable with where they need to be on the court."

## RTHS Bowling



(COURTESY PHOTOS)



## Rochelle Township High School bowlers earn RTHS and Interstate 8 Conference awards during team banquet at T-Byrd Lanes

The Rochelle Hub and Lady Hub bowling programs held their season-ending awards banquet at T-Byrd Lanes on Friday evening. Academic All-Conference winners included Karina Valdez, Cassidy Vincent (Honorable Mention), Logan Frye, Magaly Belmonte (Honorable Mention), Caleb Mortensen (Honorable Mention), Ava Norris and Bryson Stewart (Honorable Mention). RTHS Awards went to Ava Norris (Girls High Game), Magaly Belmonte (Girls Most Improved), Kylie McCullough (Girls High Series), Cassidy Vincent (Girls High Game and Bowler of the Year) and Logan Frye (Boys High Game, High Series, High Average and Bowler of the Year). All-Conference awards went to Kylie McCullough (Honorable Mention), Logan Frye and Cassidy Vincent. Senior banners went to Chris Beckman, Cassidy Vincent and Logan Frye.



# SPORTS

## Youth Swimming

### Local athletes gear up for 2025 Illinois YMCA State Championship

#### Talented young swimmers from the DeKalb County Swim Team set to make waves

**ROCHELLE** — As the eagerly anticipated YMCA State Championship approaches, five exceptional swimmers from Rochelle, representing the DeKalb County Swim Team, are set to showcase their talents from March 14-16.

These promising athletes include Sydney Burke, Clara Lofthouse, Hudson Slattengren, Josie Slattengren, and Grace Williams. Unfortunately, Taylor Burke, who achieved District Championship times, had her season cut short due to an injury.

Sydney Burke has proven herself as a versatile swimmer, earning qualifying times in five individual events. Her dedication and hard work have positioned her as a strong contender in the upcoming championship. With her focus and determination, Sydney is ready to make a significant impact in each of her events.

Clara Lofthouse's remarkable achievement of earning qualifying times

in all 11 individual events underscores her exceptional talent and versatility. Clara's consistent performance and unwavering commitment have made her a standout swimmer, and she is poised to excel in every race she competes in during the championship.

Hudson Slattengren has secured a spot on the Boys 8 and under relay team. His inclusion in the relay team is a testament to his speed and teamwork skills. Hudson's energy and enthusiasm will undoubtedly contribute to the relay team's success, and he is eager to demonstrate his abilities on this prominent stage.

Josie Slattengren has earned qualifying times in five individual events, showcasing her talent and dedication. Josie's commitment to her training and her impressive performances in recent meets have earned her a place in the state championship. Her determination and passion for swimming

will drive her to perform at her best.

Grace Williams has made significant strides in her swimming career, highlighted by her remarkable 22-second improvement in the 500-meter freestyle at a recent meet. This impressive feat earned her a spot in her first State Championship.

In addition, Grace also earned a state time for one other event at the district championship, further showcasing her talent and dedication. Grace's breakthrough performance is a testament to her hard work and perseverance, and she is excited to compete at this higher level.

Taylor Burke, who achieved District Championship times, unfortunately, faced an untimely injury that ended her season prematurely. Taylor's accomplishments and dedication to the sport are commendable, and her potential remains undeniable. The Rochelle community wishes her a speedy recovery and looks



(PHOTO BY LIFEWORKS PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO)

**From left to right is: Taylor Burke, Sydney Burke, Grace Williams, Hudson Slattengren, Josie Slattengren and Clara Lofthouse.**

forward to her return to the pool.

As these talented young swimmers from Rochelle prepare to compete at the YMCA State Championship, their dedication,

hard work, and passion for swimming are evident. The support from their community and their remarkable achievements thus far will undoubtedly propel them to excel in their respective

events.

The future looks bright for these promising athletes from the DeKalb County Swim Team as they continue to make waves in the swimming world.

## Rochelle Basketball Club

(COURTESY PHOTO)



### Rochelle Basketball Club eighth-graders complete perfect season with league title

The Rochelle Basketball Club eighth-grade travel team recently completed its season undefeated in league play, defeating Sycamore 42-32 and Sterling 47-44 in Saturday's tournament to win the league championship. Team members include Joey Chadwick, Mikey Chadwick, Landin Hudson, Eliot Kessen, Mason Lopez, Declan McKinney, Aiden Ranken, Riley Smith, Vinny Tornabene and Nolan Zick. The team is coached by Will McKinney and Brett Zick.

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# SPORTS

## Youth Bowling

(COURTESY PHOTOS)



### T-Byrd Lanes hosts 19th Annual Rochelle Association Youth City Tournament

T-Byrd Lanes hosted the 19th Annual Rochelle Association Youth City Tournament on Saturday, March 1. Bowling started at 11 a.m. and 27 athletes competed for \$1,500 in total scholarship prizes. Levi Waddle rolled the high tournament series of 622 and Zachary Waddle rolled the high tournament game of 255. Among the winners from the tournament were Landric Messer (8U Boys), Camilla Ramos and Josie Messer (8U Girls), Gryffin Campbell (10U Boys), Brooklyn Shepard (10U Girls), Zachary Waddle (12U Boys), Audrey Metcalf (12U Girls), Austin Hartnett (15U Boys), Kiera Hopp (15U Girls), Levi Waddle (18U Boys) and Kylie McCullough (18U Girls).

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# SPORTS

## RTHS Wrestling

# Record-setting seniors lead Hubs to 21-win season

## Rochelle qualifies five athletes for state tournaments during 2024-25 campaign

BY RUSSELL HODGES  
SPORTS EDITOR

**ROCHELLE**—Head coach Alphonso Vruno emphasized individual success as the Rochelle Hub varsity wrestling team progressed through the 2024-25 season. The focus on individual results culminated with another trip to the IHSA Boys Individual State Finals in Champaign, where the program landed three medalists on the podium, a school record for one season.

Rochelle finished with a 21-7 overall record and a 15-0 record in the Interstate 8, winning the conference championship for the third consecutive season. With a record-setting senior class spearheading the charge, Rochelle landed three IHSA regional champions and placed second at the regional tournament as a team. The Hubs sent six wrestlers to sectionals this season.

"This senior class is really special to our program, not only for their results on the mat, but their leadership and direction they've helped this program go in," Vruno said. "They bought into what we wanted them to and I can see some of these kids want to get back on the mat in a couple of weeks. The culture these kids are creating... Even though we had a very successful season, some of the kids might say we left some things on the table. Living in the 'never satisfied' space isn't a bad thing and we're already

looking ahead to how we can improve for next season."

Rochelle delivered in tournament action throughout the season, taking second in the Giardini Invitational at Rockford East and third out of 25 schools at the XLIX Sycamore Invitational. The Hubs, who finished fourth in the Marty Williams Invitational at Mahomet-Seymour, successfully defended their conference title at the JV level, winning the Interstate 8 tournament for a third year in a row. Rochelle ended the season with five IHSA state qualifiers (four boys, one girl).

"Our kids know how to wrestle on their feet and I thought we got better in our short offense," Vruno said. "When kids take bad shots, we have to score off of those and I thought our kids got better at their re-attacks. That helped a lot of our kids win some close matches this season... You can never be too good on the mat and while I think our team has made big strides in the top position, we have a lot of work to do in the bottom. Getting out is going to be a focus next year. Our kids struggle with the perception that they're trapped down there and that's not the case."

Among the seniors set to depart from the varsity program are Kaiden Morris (49-5) and Grant Gensler (49-7), who each medaled in fifth at the state meet and set a new school record for single-season wins with 49. Morris became



Senior Kaiden Morris finished 49-5 this season, becoming the Rochelle Hub varsity wrestling program's new record holder for career victories while tying teammate Grant Gensler for the single-season wins record.

(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

the winningest wrestler in RTHS history this season, ending his career with 172 victories.

Also moving on will be Xavier Villalobos (42-6), whose historic career included becoming Rochelle's first four-time IHSA state qualifier, three-time state medalist and two-time state runner up. After taking second as a freshman and fifth as a junior, Villalobos returned to the state finals and placed second this year.

On the girls side, senior Dempsey Atkinson (24-3) concluded her historic career at the state meet and finished her time at RTHS as both a three-time IHSA

state qualifier and a two-time IHSA state medalist. While Atkinson will depart from the program after this season, junior Cammyla Macias (22-8) and sophomore Adyson Carter are two Lady Hubs who could carry the torch into next season.

Although Rochelle will see a talented and accomplished senior class departing, the Hubs are still expected to remain a competitive squad next winter. Junior Roman Villalobos (39-12) earned his 100th career victory and wrestled at state for the first time. Villalobos headlines a deep junior class that includes past sectional qualifiers such as

Brenden Voight (27-9) and Freddie Hernandez (34-14). Deegan Schabacker (25-16), Keagan Albers (17-17) and Frank Nasca (20-20) are three more juniors to watch for.

The Hubs also saw multiple underclassmen step up this season. Sophomores Josh Lassiter (26-17) and Hadley Losoya (5-0), as well as freshmen Aidan Lopez (34-13) and AJ Milan (12-8), are only a few of the young wrestlers who could see bigger varsity roles next season. Lopez was one of six Rochelle wrestlers who advanced to the sectional tournament in Washington this season.

"We're looking for our young wrestlers to be really big contributors next year," Vruno said. "Kids like Freddie, Roman and Brenden are going into their senior seasons and we'll be looking for their leadership. Sometimes they struggle to be vocal, but they do a nice job of setting an example on the mat. Kids like Deegan and Keagan have made huge strides year after year and I'm hoping they can break through. We're really hoping Hadley can crack the lineup next year. I've talked with my assistants and we think that we can be a better dual team next season."

## Kishwaukee College

# Lady Kougar softball team ready to hit the diamond

## Kishwaukee College squad opens season with round robin at Rosemont Dome

**MALTA**—The Kougars will look to build on last year's 30+ win season that saw them advance to the finals of their regional quadrant.

This year they return six starters from last year's strong squad. This includes All-conference P-Alyssa Wilkerson (Sycamore HS) as well as Abby Stoffa (DeKalb HS)-C, DH-Haley Von Schnase (Sycamore HS), P/3B-Kyra Johnson (Kaneland HS) and OF's Laila Anderson (Oregon HS) and Crystal Haack (Hiawatha HS).

Key newcomers are transfers Kailey Goetz

(Oswego HS)-1B, Bella Koertner (Oregon HS)-CF and All-region performer Ana-Kate Phillips (Dixon HS)-2B, along with freshman Reilee Suter (Oregon HS)-SS. This year's team "hopes to compete for the conference crown, surpass last year's win total and have a nice post season run!" said head coach Eric Simmons.

Kish will open for a back to back weekend DH series at the Rosemont Dome February 28 and March 1 then prepare to go on their spring trip. This year will again be in Florida where they will

play Cuyahoga State, Mott College, Mid-Michigan College, Ellsworth College and Iowa Lakes CC before they return home to take on the tough Region 4 schedule that includes such teams as Kankakee, Rock Valley, Waubensee, Triton, Madison College, McHenry County College, Lake County, Harper, Morton and Moraine Valley CC. The Kougars will also have to battle through their tough Arrowhead Conference home and away DH action against Black Hawk, Highland CC, Illinois Valley, Sandburg College and Sauk Valley

CC.

## Opener

The Kishwaukee College Softball team began the regular season with a four game NJCAA Region 4 round robin at the Rosemont Dome over the Friday and Saturday event. Kish would go 3-1 overall. On Friday, the Kougars beat Joliet JC 17-1 and Prairie State 10-7. Saturday saw the team defeat Oakton 9-2 but lose the finale 17-9 to DuPage.

Game 1 highlights included Sophomore Kyra Johnson (Kaneland HS) going 3-4 with a home run, Abby Stoffa (DeKalb HS)

went 4-4, Bella Koertner (Oregon HS) had 3 RBI, Laila Anderson (Oregon HS) scored 3 runs, Kailey Goetz (Oswego HS) with 2 runs scored and Alyssa Wilkerson (Sycamore HS) picked up the win in the circle with 12 Ks.

Game 2 highlights saw Ana-Kate Phillips (Dixon HS) going 3-4, Haley Von Schnase (Sycamore HS) went 3-3 and Crystal Haack (Hiawatha HS) drove in 2 RBI. Tyra Smith (Rockford-Harlem HS) had a hit and RBI as Kyra Johnson grabbed the win pitching with freshmen Kaylee Johnson (Kaneland HS)

and Wilkerson handling late inning relief.

Game 3 Saturday opener vs Oakton Goetz had 3 RBI, Reilee Suter (Oregon HS) went 2-4 with 2 runs scored, Von Schnase went 3-4 with 2 runs scored, Lillie Gebel (Stillman Valley HS) & Koertner had an RBI each. Kyra Johnson gets the win pitching with 0 ER and 4 Ks.

Game 4 Koertner and Suter had 3 hit each, Phillips (5 RBI) and Kyra Johnson with 2 hits each, Anderson and Stoffa with a run scored each. The Kougars will now prepare for their Florida spring trip which begins on March 8 through March 14.

## NIU Football

# 60th season of Huskie Stadium opens against Holy Cross on Aug. 30

## 2025 schedule revealed, NIU to host San Diego State, Miami (Ohio) and Ball State

**DEKALB**—Home games versus San Diego State, Miami (Ohio) and Ball State and road contests at Maryland, Mississippi State and defending league champion Ohio highlight Northern Illinois University's 2025 football schedule announced

Wednesday. NIU, one of the 30 winningest Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) teams in the country over the last 15 seasons, comes into 2025 after finishing last season with its second straight bowl championship—a 28-20 double overtime win over Fresno State in

the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl—to complete an 8-5 campaign.

The Huskies open the 60th season of Huskie Stadium on Saturday, August 30 versus Holy Cross before battling Maryland (Sept. 6) and Mississippi State (Sept. 20) on the road in search of

their 20th Boneyard Win with an open date between those games.

The Huskies and Terps will play for the fourth time with the last meeting in 2004 a 23-20 win by No. 22 Maryland in College Park. The previous season, NIU had one of its most memorable victories in Huskie Stadium, a 20-13 overtime win over the 15th-ranked Terps, the highest ranked team NIU had ever defeated prior to the Huskies' historic 16-14 victory over No. 5 Notre Dame last year.

NIU will play Holy Cross and Mississippi State for the first time. The non-conference season wraps up on Saturday, Sept. 27 with a visit from San Diego State in the seventh game all-time between the teams, and the first since 2017.

NIU opens its 39th (overall) and 29th consecutive

season of Mid-American Conference play on Saturday, October 4 versus Miami (Ohio) in the school's 118th Homecoming game. NIU's Homecoming celebration is the oldest in the state of Illinois, while the game versus Miami also honors the late Bill Mallory, the former MU and NIU head coach who led both teams to MAC Championships during a hall of fame career, with the winner claiming the Mallory Cup.

MAC play continues with games at Eastern Michigan (Oct. 11) and at defending MAC Champion Ohio (Oct. 18) before Ball State comes to NIU with the Bronze Stalk Trophy on the line on Saturday, October 25.

November #MACTION gets underway with the two teams that helped coin the name as NIU and

Toledo meet in Toledo on Wednesday, November 5. The Huskies take on new MAC member UMass on Wednesday, November 12 in Massachusetts before returning home for a Tuesday night (November 18) date with Western Michigan in Huskie Stadium. NIU wraps up its 124th season of football—57th as an FBS program—and final season in the MAC at home versus Kent State on Friday, November 28. The Huskies announced on January 7, 2025, that NIU football will compete in the Mountain West Conference beginning in 2026.

The 2025 MAC Championship game will be played on Saturday, December 6 at Ford Field in Detroit, where NIU has won five of its six MAC titles.

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No. 0301  
(March 2 and 9, 2025)  
**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OGLE COUNTY, ILLINOIS**  
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF KENT R. BRADLE, Deceased.  
NO. 2025-PR-17  
CLAIM NOTICE  
Notice is given of the

death of KENT R. BRADLE, of Stillman Valley, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued on March 4, 2025, to DAN DELANEY, whose address is 2634 Park Pl., Madison, WI 53705, and whose attorneys are Fearer, Nye & Chadwick, 420 4th Avenue, PO Box 117, Rochelle, IL 61068.  
Claims against the Estate may be filed in the office of the Circuit Clerk of the Court at Ogle County Courthouse, Oregon, IL 61061, or with the representative, or both, no later than September 9, 2025, and any claim not filed within that period is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.  
FEARER, NYE & CHADWICK, Attorneys for DAN DELANEY, Administrator of the Estate of KENT R. BRADLE, deceased  
No. 0308  
(March 09, 16 and 23, 2025)

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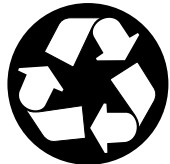
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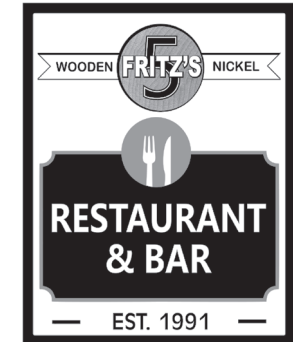
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## WE SUPPORT OUR HUBS!

### HUB SPOTLIGHT



**Edwin Mendez**  
Year: Freshman  
Sport: Track

**Q: How many years have you been playing this sport?**  
A: One year.  
**Q: What do you enjoy most about this sport?**  
A: Competing.  
**Q: What is your favorite school subject and why?**  
A: Math because it's easy.  
**Q: Who is your favorite athlete and why?**  
A: Derrick Rose because he had the best prime.  
**Q: Who is your biggest role**

**model and why?**  
A: My dad because he's a hard worker.  
**Q: What is your dream job and why?**  
A: An electrician for the money.  
**Q: Where would your dream vacation be and why?**  
A: The Philippines because the weather is nice.  
**Q: What is your favorite thing about being a student-athlete at RTHS?**  
A: The coaches.

**Eduardo Cisneros**  
Year: Freshman  
Sport: Track



**Q: How many years have you been playing this sport?**  
A: This is my second year.  
**Q: What do you enjoy most about this sport?**  
A: Friends, travel and the experience.  
**Q: Who is your favorite athlete and why?**  
A: Lionel Messi because of how he plays and how he's influenced me.  
**Q: What is your favorite school subject and why?**  
A: Conditioning because it's fun.  
**Q: Who is your biggest role model and why?**  
A: My mom and my sister because

they've always been there for me no matter what, they never give up on me and they give me the most, even when they don't have anything.  
**Q: What is your dream job and why?**  
A: To be a professional footballer.  
**Q: Where would your dream vacation be and why?**  
A: Spain because the weather is nice and the landmarks are beautiful.  
**Q: What is your favorite thing about being a student-athlete at RTHS?**  
A: The challenges, the fun and the people I get to meet.

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**GO, HUBS!**  
Good luck to our local student athletes!

